A

SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE THE

LORDS SPIRITUAL AND TEMPORAL

ON

THURSDAY, JANUARY 30, 1794.

Die Veneris, 31° *Januarii*, 1794.

ORDERED by the Lords Spiritual and Temporal in Parliament aſſembled, That the Thanks of this Houſe be, and are hereby given to the Lord Biſhop of Carliſle, for the Sermon by him preached before this Houſe yeſterday, in the Abbey Church, Weſtminſter; and that he be deſired to cauſe the ſame to be forthwith printed and publiſhed.

GEORGE ROSE, Cler' Parliamentor'.

A

SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE THE

LORDS SPIRITUAL AND TEMPORAL

IN THE

ABBEY CHURCH OF ST. PETER, WESTMINSTER,

ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 30, 1794,

BEING

THE ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

MARTYRDOM OF KING CHARLES THE FIRST.

BY
EDWARD, LORD BISHOP OF CARLISLE.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR R. FAULDER, NEW BOND STREET.

1794.

VERNON

ECCLESIASTES, chap. vii. ver. 8.

Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof; and the patient in ſpirit is better than the proud in ſpirit.

IT was evidently the intention of Solomon to connect the two maxims which he hath thus delivered, and it is ſcarcely poſſible for us to miſtake the connection which he intended to point out.

Better, ſaith he, is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof:—*better*, that is, as being every way of ſuperior importance:—*better*, becauſe it is in fact that to which every thing elſe muſt be referred. For the wiſdom or the folly of the means which have been uſed, can only be determined by

the degree of good or evil which ſhall be ultimately produced. And the patient in ſpirit, he proceeds, is better than the proud in ſpirit: *better* indeed for many reaſons, but manifeſtly for this among the reſt, that the patient and ſober mind will of itſelf be more diſpoſed to act with coolneſs and deliberation. Such a mind poſſeſſes in itſelf the materials at leaſt and the foundations of real prudence. But from pride, and paſſion, and reſentment, eager as they are and intemperate in their very natures, how ſhall we expect that cautious judgment, which pauſes, even in the very outſet, to calculate the probability of events, to conſider conſequences, to balance good and evil, and which decides, not from haſty impulſe, but from rational conviction of the general reſult?

There is no reaſon to imagine, that Solomon had any particular ſituation of life excluſively in his view. The obſervations are given generally, and they are of general application. Through the whole of life indeed, and in all its different circumſtances and ſituations, the maxims of prudence and the rules of duty have a much nearer reſemblance to each other, than men are uſually willing to ſuppoſe.

Convinced as we muſt be, from every day's experience, that our paſſions and our reſentments cannot be indulged with impunity in private life, it would ſurely be ſtrange ſhould we permit ourſelves to think that they may be ſo indulged, if not with abſolute impunity, yet at leaſt with leſs hazard, in the conflicts of political parties, and civil diſſenſions. Such parties and ſuch diſſenſions, if the words be uſed in their ſober and moderated ſenſe, are not perhaps in themſelves an evil. There is ſcarcely any country in which they can be entirely and totally prevented: leaſt of all among ourſelves, where the freedom of public opinion (the expreſſion being taken as before in its ſober and moderated ſenſe) is not only not oppoſed, but protected even and encouraged.

Be it ſo—yet even among ourſelves it will ſtill be true, that "the patient in ſpirit is better than the proud in ſpirit." It will ſtill be true, that the real lover of his country will put more than one queſtion to his own mind before he permits himſelf to unſettle the minds of others, and to ſpread diſſatisfaction and diſcontent among the community at large. "Better is the end of a thing, and of much more conſequence for him to conſider,

than the beginning thereof." He will aſk himſelf, not only whether the object which he propoſes to attain be in itſelf deſirable, abſtractedly and ſeparately conſidered, but he will aſk himſelf alſo, whether it be deſirable at the price which the attainment of it may coſt.—Thus to calculate, and thus to conſider, what is it in effect but the common prudence of life?—that prudence which, like the holy charity of the Goſpel, often endureth much, and is contented not always to ſeek even that which is ſtrictly and literally her own.

If theſe principles be departed from, the love of our country becomes but an empty name: it is no longer what it claims to be, the deſire of doing real good to the community of which we are members; but it is the indulgence of our own paſſions, of our pride, our animoſities, and our reſentments. In ſuch a caſe, the parties and the diſſenſions which we have before conſidered as the almoſt neceſſary conſequences of our freedom, which we did not even venture to call an evil, will now however become the very worſt of evils and the moſt intolerable; and the principles which influence them will produce the ſame effects preciſely as in private life; the ſame I mean in their nature:

ture: but called forth as they will be to a wider ſphere of action, the magnitude alſo of their effects will be increaſed proportionably; and their influence will be marked, not by the private misfortunes and diſappointments of the individual, but by public calamity and extended miſchief.

In times like the preſent, times of ſolicitude and alarm on the one hand, and of terror and aſtoniſhment on the other, I know of no reflections which it is of more importance to impreſs upon our minds, than thoſe which have been thus derived from the words of the text. Nor are there any to which we ſhall be led more naturally by that ſad remembrance of former troubles, which is on this day enjoined to us by the wiſe and pious ordinance of our forefathers. I have no ſcruple ſo to call it. There have indeed been thoſe who have ſpoken of it in other terms: and perhaps too there have been times when the intention of this day may have been perverted and abuſed.—Whilſt the feelings of men were yet ſore from the calamities which they had ſuffered, and pains were ſtill taken to continue in the nation the ſame ferment of paſſion, and the ſame ſpirit of contention which had been the ſource of thoſe calamities, we

are

are not to wonder, if men could not bring themſelves immediately to think and ſpeak upon the ſubject with calmneſs and ſobriety; and if the very act of religious humiliation were ſometimes profaned by the fierceneſs and the intemperance of wrath. But the wounds which then rankled, have long ſince been healed: and what is there that ſhould hinder us from reaſoning and reflecting coolly, and from endeavouring (the preſent moment is ſurely that which calls for ſuch endeavours) to profit by the ſad example, and to derive to ourſelves the leſſons of prudence and of caution from the errors and miſconduct of our anceſtors?

It is not to be denied, that in that unhappy period, the cauſes of alarm to the nation were many and well grounded: that the encroachments of the prerogative had been, in many particulars, ſuch as it was right and neceſſary to oppoſe and to repreſs: ſtill leſs is it to be denied, that many who firſt oppoſed theſe encroachments were real lovers of their country, and grave, conſcientious and thinking men, ſeeking for that redreſs only, and thoſe remedies which might be attained by means already known and authoriſed, and by the power

power of law. But there were others who acted on very different ideas; who from the beginning inſinuated, and in no long time were bold enough openly to declare, that the means of redreſs already known and authoriſed were feeble and inſufficient: that new expedients muſt be found, and new powers aſſumed: and that the Conſtitution, inadequate, as it was ſaid, to ſecure the liberty of the ſubject, muſt be modelled and formed anew.

This is that pernicious doctrine, which, at whatever time and in whatever ſhape it may appear, we ſhould be eager to proſcribe. The wiſe and the diſpaſſionate have taught us rather, that it is the great and diſtinguiſhing character of our Conſtitution, that no violation of it can take place, which may not be conſtitutionally redreſſed:—and time and experience have confirmed their leſſon. But the contrary opinion will lead at once, and they who maintain it mean perhaps that it *ſhould* lead, to introduce another agent, an agent of all others the moſt terrible,—the paſſions and the unbridled will of the multitude at large.

And

And ſuch was literally the caſe in the period we are now conſidering. Whatever colouring was attempted to diſguiſe the fact, the appeal was really made to the multitude at large. We know what artifices were employed to foment jealouſies and to aggravate ſuſpicions: unhappily there were grounds for both. But no one will ſeek to juſtify the exceſſive pains which were taken to poiſon the minds of men to the very utmoſt, till they were brought at length to diſtruſt any terms of accommodation, and any conceſſions whatſoever,—any at leaſt which could be legally and rightly made. And when men were thus perſuaded that no real and effectual ſecurity could be found for them under the eſtabliſhed form of government, the next ſtep was eaſy, to perſuade them to join in the ſubverſion of it.

The object itſelf, however, and the full extent to which it was afterwards purſued, were long kept back from view. The entire overthrow of the Crown was not at firſt even ſuſpected by that multitude who were tools only and inſtruments in the hands of others. But, in the mean time, they had been led on to ſecond and to approve many of thoſe

acts, which were as truly ſubverſive of the Conſtitution, as was even the final rejection of Kingly power. When there was given, for example, to the Parliament a permanence independent of the Crown, when the deliberations of the Nobles were at firſt awed by violence, and afterwards openly annihilated by defiance and contempt, the Conſtitution was without doubt violated as directly, as it was afterwards by the foul and unnatural murder of the Sovereign.

They meanwhile, who had ſought the redreſs only of real grievances by right and juſtifiable means, had withdrawn themſelves as might be expected from a ſcene of things ſo contrary to that which they had looked for or intended. The change had taken place with different men at different times, and had been more or leſs early, in proportion as each was poſſeſſed of more or leſs diſcernment to develop the arts of others, and more or leſs fortitude to oppoſe them. But now many even of thoſe whoſe views had been leſs pure, were at length awakened to recollection, and ſaw when it was too late, that they alſo had been the tools and inſtruments of men more wicked and more artful than themſelves.

In truth, amid all the ſcene of darkneſs and confuſion, Juſtice however, eternal Juſtice had ſtill held on her courſe, directed as it were by the hand of God, or at leaſt by that ſeries of moral cauſes and effects, which is indeed the ordinance and will of God.

They, who under ſome ſpecious pretext will employ the multitude to forward their own intereſts and deſigns, will always be in danger from that multitude, when they ſhall once come to perceive that their ignorance hath been ſo abuſed. They who offer to their followers no common object, no common point of union, beyond the deſire of ſubverting and overthrowing what is now eſtabliſhed, will find at laſt, when that overthrow is accompliſhed, that there will be an end alſo of the authority which they themſelves had poſſeſſed. The union which in theſe caſes may for a while appear to ſubſiſt, is not an union of reaſon, nor even of opinion, but of intemperate paſſions only, which ſeeking each of them for their own ſeparate gratification, find a common obſtacle in the way of all, which all are eager therefore, in the firſt place, and intereſted to remove. But when that is done—then, as to what next ſhall

follow,

follow, every man and every ſet of men will rate their own wiſdom and their own conſequence as high as others can do, and all will think themſelves equally entitled to judge and to decide. One opinion therefore will beget another, if it be but for the ſake of oppoſition; and they who have been taught to diſregard authorities which were ancient and eſtabliſhed, will not eaſily be brought to reſpect and to obey thoſe new authorities which they muſt be conſcious are but creatures of their own.

That Juſtice therefore, for which God hath thus made proviſion by the train of moral cauſes and effects, held on, as we have ſaid before, even amid theſe times of trouble, her equal courſe. There was no party which was not in its turn deceived and diſappointed of its hopes. There was ſcarcely even an individual who did not in his turn become an object of vengeance and of perſecution to thoſe very men with whom he had been once united; and if he eſcaped the ſword of battle, or the axe of the executioner, he was left however with the mortifying reflection, that he had been falſe, wicked and unprincipled, only to ſerve the cauſe and to promote the intereſts of his bittereſt foes.

So was it, that the Nobles who had weakly yielded to their fears and apprehenſions, and had ſevered themſelves from their parent ſtock, were deſpiſed and ſcorned, and, when occaſion offered, were treated even with marked ſeverity by thoſe very Commons, to whom they had blindly joined themſelves. So was it, that in their turn the Commons were doomed to feel the imperious ſcorn of the leaders of their armies; and that the authority of thoſe leaders was fettered and inſulted by the mutinous and unquiet ſpirit of the ſoldiery. So was it alſo, that when the Church of England had ſunk beneath her foes, the Preſbyterians enjoyed not long the triumph which they had gained; and the Independent, a fiercer and more embittered enemy, ſnatched from them their prey, and retaliated on them the unrelenting wrath which they had exerciſed on others. And ſo at length it was, that Scotland herſelf loſing the very rank and conſideration of an independent kingdom, was bowed beneath the rod of the uſurper, as a conquered province, to be held only by the ſword. For Ireland, the miſery with which it was overwhelmed was ſuch as would mock deſcription. It was that, of which a few years ago it might have

been ſaid, that the ages of the world had ſcarcely ſhewn its parallel. And at home, a ſevere and jealous uſurpation, a government of terror, rapine, and proſcription, defaced and depopulated that Land, which had once been known as the fair abode of peace, affluence, and happineſs.

Would to God, that theſe reflections might be permitted to ſtop here! would to God, that we had no examples to refer to, but thoſe which have had place among ourſelves! There is no pleaſure to a generous mind, in dwelling upon the calamities of others. But it is not poſſible, when the providence of God hath permitted an example to ariſe more ſtriking ſtill and more terrible than our own—it is not poſſible that we ſhould cloſe our eyes againſt it: it would not even be right that we ſhould attempt to do ſo.—"When the judgments of God, ſaith the Prophet, are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteouſneſs." And if the miſeries which our fathers were doomed to ſuffer have not yet been ſufficient to teach us righteouſneſs and wiſdom, let us, at leaſt, learn thoſe leſſons from the ſtill more dreadful miſeries of our neighbours.

Only let there be no attempt to practiſe deceit and impoſition upon ourſelves. It will then be our firſt wiſdom to ſee and to acknowledge, that the foundations of the calamity have in both caſes a near reſemblance to each other. In both caſes, there were real grievances to be complained of: in both caſes, there was a haſty ſubverſion of the eſtabliſhed government, before men were at all agreed, as to that which ſhould be ſubſtituted in its ſtead; and in both caſes alſo, there was a want of that prudence, which might have calculated before-hand the force of thoſe new powers which were about to be created and ſet in motion, when the multitude ſhould be once emancipated from the control to which it had been before accuſtomed.

I do not mean to ſuggeſt an exact parallel in any of theſe particulars: I know that none of them will admit it. But it is very poſſible that things may be the ſame in principle, though they may differ very widely in degree—and on that account may differ alſo ſo very much in their appearance, that at firſt they will be ſcarcely thought to be the ſame even in their principle. Thus it is that every error, every imprudence with which our anceſtors may be charged, has been copied by the unhappy

people

people, of whom we are ſpeaking, with tenfold aggravation and exceſs; as if they had read our hiſtory only to derive from it the examples of our wickedneſs and folly. The ſubverſion of the eſtabliſhed government was with them infinitely more precipitate: it reached alſo infinitely further in its extent. It was the ſubverſion of the whole of public order; for it was the ſubverſion of all the forms and relations of which public order is compoſed. With us, nothing ſimilar was thought of or attempted:—with us, the paſſions of the multitude were indeed unwiſely inflamed, and they were brought undoubtedly far too forward on the ſcene of action. With them, the whole maſs of the people were at once ſet looſe from reſtraint: and of what people? a people the ſeveral parts of which were already exaſperated againſt each other: a people, who knew not, as we know, that beauteous train of imperceptible gradations, by which the higheſt orders of ſociety are connected with the loweſt; but in whoſe eyes the differences of rank and ſtation appeared to be little elſe than a ſyſtem of capricious inequality, of privileges and exemptions conferred on ſome, and an unreaſonable depreſſion inflicted upon others. It might have been foreſeen, that ſuch a people, liberated as it were in an inſtant from every ſpe-

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cies of control, would in all likelihood begin by inflaming themſelves with the recollection of all thoſe real or fancied injuries which they had ſuffered from their ſuperiors; and probably therefore, as was in fact the caſe, the firſt moments of their emancipation would be ſpent in vengeance and in blood.

The effects of ſuch a power, ſo called at once into action, it was perhaps impoſſible to have calculated. A real prudence therefore would not have riſqued ſo terrible an experiment. But the evil ſeems rather to have been, that there were men vain enough to ſuppoſe, not only that they could rightly eſtimate it, but even that they could govern and control it. Alas! of thoſe who have ſo attempted, what has been the lot, but to periſh in the attempt, and to expiate by their exile or their blood, their crimes, their errors, and their preſumption? And what other lot can remain for thoſe who now attempt it? But we muſt revoke the word: They do *not* attempt it. With theſe men, the ſecret of their government is only to cheriſh and to inflame ſtill farther appetites already depraved; to anticipate the vitiated cravings of criminal and inordinate deſires;

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and to guard, as it were, againſt the poſſibility of a return to reaſon, by obliterating from the minds of a whole people every idea of former times, or former duties; every idea in ſhort, which might hereafter bring to their remembrance what once they *had been*.

Miſerable and afflicted People!—For ourſelves, let us bow before our God with humility and fear: let us thank Him, that we of this nation were once recovered from the wanderings of our hearts, and beg devoutly, that he would never puniſh us by a renewal of thoſe deluſions, or ſuffer us to be again ſo tempted. For them,—though in their fury they have indeed attempted to kindle among us alſo thoſe flames of diſcord which have conſumed their land, and to involve us in the ſame guilt and miſery with themſelves—yet even ſo, even whilſt we are compelled, in defence of all that is dear and precious to us, to unſheath the ſword, and to ſeek for our ſecurity in War, becauſe in War only it could be found,—ſtill let them know, that the Religion which they have rejected, and the Saviour whom they have defied, have taught us even now to pray for their happineſs and peace.

For unto Thee, O Almighty God, unto Thee alone it belongeth to terminate, at thy good pleaſure, theſe awful diſpenſations of thy Providence. Give unto them, we beſeech Thee, that heart which may once more incline them to humble themſelves before Thee; and for the ſake of Him who died upon the croſs, for Him, and for his precious blood, be not even now extreme to mark what is done amiſs: Pity and forgive the infatuation of thy miſerable and fallen creatures.

FINIS.